IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A hot plate for heating a wafer comprising a ceramic substrate in disc form, said ceramic substrate having a lower face and an upper face,

wherein a resistance element pattern having a thickness dispersion of ±3 μm or less is formed on the lower face of the ceramic substrate, and

said resistance element pattern is formed by a dry process,

the thickness dispersion being the larger of the absolute value of Tmax – Tav and the absolute value of Tmin – Tav,

Tav being an average thickness obtained by averaging thicknesses of arbitrarily selected 10 points of the resistance element, Tav being within a range of 3 to 500 μm,

Tmax being the maximum thickness of said 10 points, and

Tmin being the minimum thickness of said 10 points.

Claim 2 (Original): The hot plate according to claim 1, wherein the thickness dispersion of the resistance element is ±1 μm or less.

Claim 3 (Canceled).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The hot plate according to claim 1, wherein the thickness of said resistance element is from [[1]] 3 to 10 μm.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The hot plate according to claim 1, wherein said ceramic substrate is at least one kind selected from a nitride ceramic and a carbide ceramic.

Claim 6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The hot plate according to claim 1, wherein said resistance element has a multilayer structure, and among a plurality of layers constituting said resistance element, the layer nearest to the substrate comprises titanium or chromium.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The hot plate according to claim 1, wherein said resistance element comprises a first layer comprising titanium; a second layer comprising molybdenum and having a larger thickness than said first layer, on said first layer; and a third layer comprising nickel and having an intermediate thickness between the thickness of said first layer and that of said second layer, on said second layer.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The hot plate according to claim 1, wherein said resistance element comprises a titanium layer having a thickness of 0.1 to 0.5 μm, a molybdenum layer having a thickness of 0.5 to 7.0 μm, on said titanium layer, and a nickel layer having a thickness of 0.4 to 2.5 μm, on said molybdenum layer.

Claims 10-13 (Canceled).

Claim 14 (Withdrawn): A process for producing a hot plate wherein a resistance element having a thickness dispersion of ±3 μm or less is formed on an insulating substrate, comprising forming said resistance element by a film-depositing method based on a dry process.

Claim 15 (Withdrawn): A process for producing a hot plate wherein a resistance element having a thickness dispersion of ±3 μm or less is formed on an insulating substrate, comprising forming said resistance element by RF sputtering.

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): A process for producing a hot plate wherein a resistance element having a thickness dispersion of ±3 μm or less is formed on an insulating substrate, comprising printing a resistance element paste made of scaly noble metal powder and firing the paste.

Claims 17-21 (Canceled).

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The hot plate according to claim ~~17~~ 1, wherein said dry process is RF sputtering.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): A hot plate for heating a wafer comprising a ceramic substrate in disc form, said ceramic substrate having a lower face and an upper face,

wherein a resistance element pattern having a thickness dispersion of ±3 μm or less is formed on the lower face of the ceramic substrate, and

wherein said resistance element pattern is made of scaly noble metal powder,

the thickness dispersion being the larger of the absolute value of Tmax – Tav and the absolute value of Tmin – Tav,

Tav being an average thickness obtained by averaging thicknesses of arbitrarily selected 10 points of the resistance element, Tav being within a range of 3 to 500 μm,

Tmax being the maximum thickness of said 10 points, and

Tmin being the minimum thickness of said 10 points.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): The hot plate according to claim 23, wherein the thickness dispersion of the resistance element is ±1 μm or less.

Claim 25 (Canceled).

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The hot plate according to claim 23, wherein the thickness of said resistance element is from [[1]] 3 to 10 μm.

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The hot plate according to claim 23, wherein said ceramic substrate is at least one kind selected from a nitride ceramic and a carbide ceramic.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): A process comprising heating a wafer with the hot plate according to claim 1.

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claim 1 has been amended by incorporating the subject matter of Claim 17 therein. Claim 1 has been further amended, and Claim 23 amended, by inserting the definition of thickness dispersion, as supported in the specification at page 3, lines 10-23. The maximum thickness limitation is supported by Claim 3 and the minimum thickness limitation is supported by the description of the maximum thickness dispersion of 3 μm, combined with the description in the specification at page 3, lines 22-23. Claims 3, 17-21 and 25 have been canceled. Claim 22 has been amended to depend on Claim 1.

No new matter is believed to have been added by the above amendment. With entry thereof, Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-9, 22-24 and 26-28 are now active in the application. Claims 14-16 stand withdrawn from consideration.